Feb. 10, 1925. 1,526,017

T. B. SEARLE

GAME BOARD

Filed Dec. 26, 1923 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

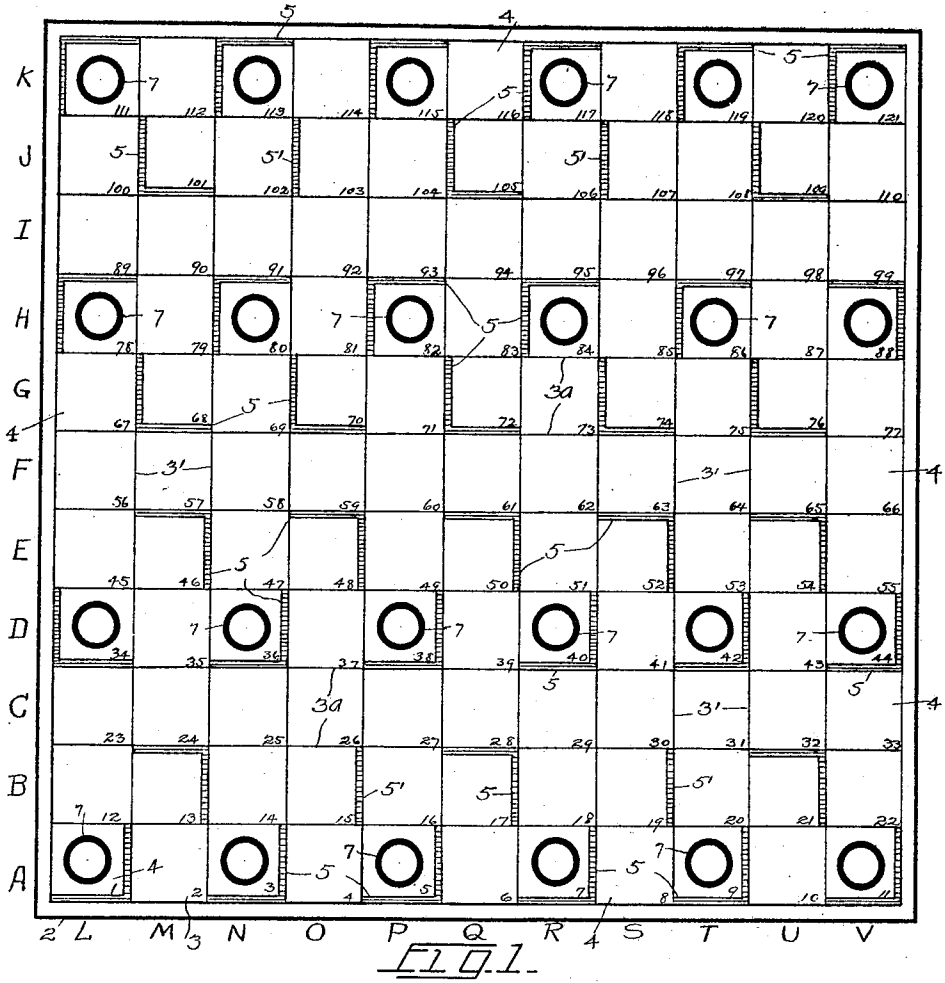


FIG. 1.

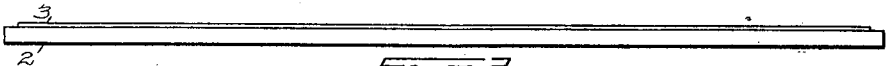


FIG. 2.

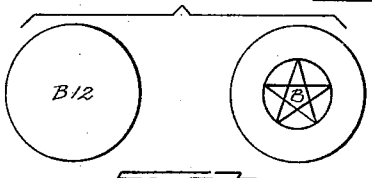


FIG. 3.



FIG. 4.

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2 Sheets-Sheet 2

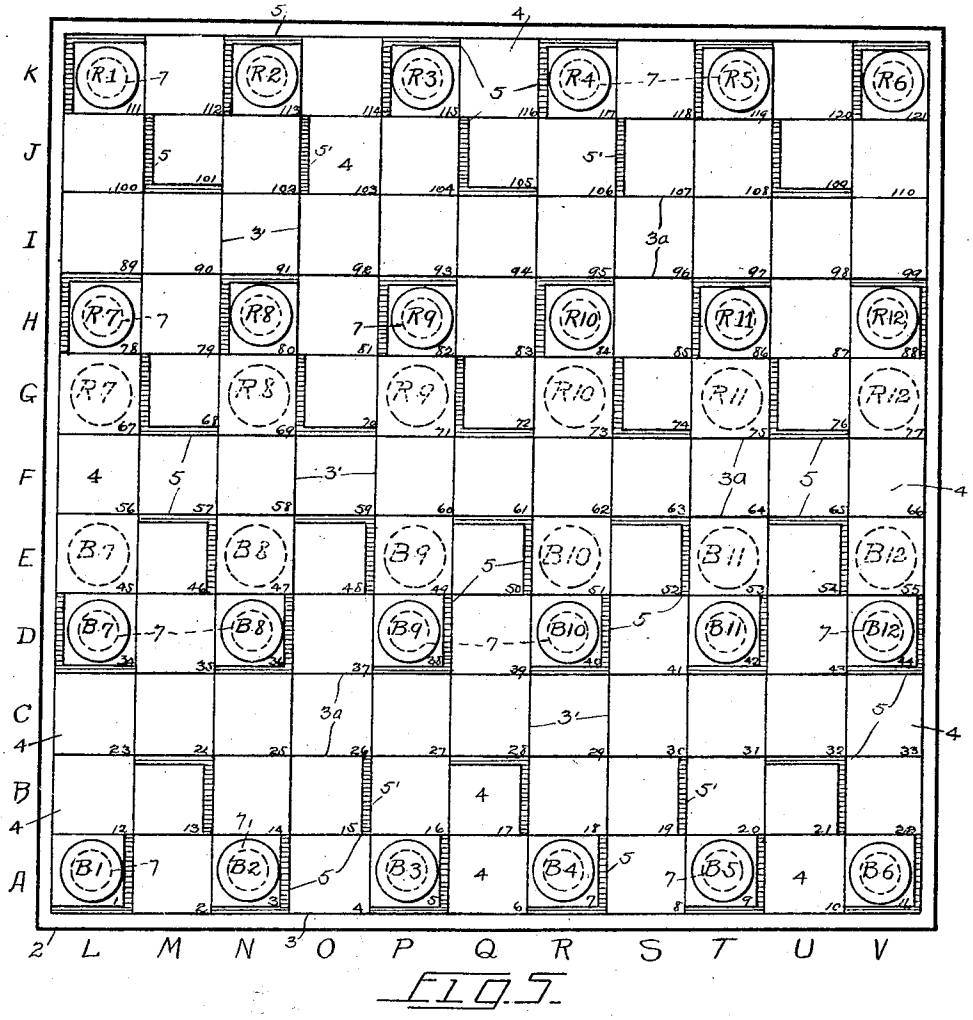


FIG. 5.

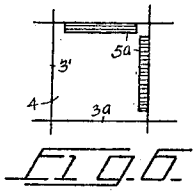


FIG. 6.

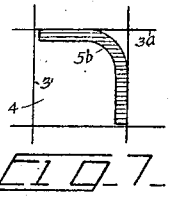


FIG. 7.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

THOMAS B. SEARLE, OF SYRACUSE, NEW YORK.

GAME BOARD.

Application filed December 26, 1923. Serial No. 682,720.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, THOMAS B. SEARLE, a citizen of the United States, residing at Syracuse, in the county of Onondaga and State of New York, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Game Boards, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to improvements in game boards, and has for its object to provide an amusement device of the class, by means of which two persons may play many different games of skill. A further object is to provide a game board having a relatively large number of contiguous squares, upon and across which similar, but differently colored or shaped, playing pieces may be placed and moved in different directions, during the progress of a game; certain of said squares at corresponding parts of the board being marked to indicate the initial disposition and arrangement of the playing pieces. A further object is to provide a plurality of barriers, which are disposed at intervals in the corresponding rows of squares, at each side of the middle of the board; the said barriers being arranged to obstruct the continuous travel of the playing pieces forwardly, backwardly and laterally, thereby compelling the players to move their pieces in tortuous or zig-zag paths, for capturing, or avoiding capture, as well as for cornering or preventing the cornering of said pieces. And a further object is to provide a game board upon which the playing pieces of either opponent may be captured, like in the well-known game of draughts, and wherein an opponent's pieces may be cornered or trapped at different points on the board.

I attain these objects by the means set forth in the detailed description which follows, and as illustrated by the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a top face view of the game board; showing the position and arrangement of the barrier marked squares upon which the playing pieces are disposed at the start of the game. Fig. 2 is an edge view of the board. Fig. 3 is respectively a top and a bottom view of one of the playing pieces. Fig. 4 is an edge view of the same. Fig. 5 is a top face view of the board; showing the playing pieces in full lines ready for the starting of a game, also showing by dotted lines the progress of certain of the pieces during the early stages of the game. And Figs. 6 and 7 are views showing modified forms of the barriers.

In the drawings, 2 represents the body of the game board, which may consist of paper, card-board, or wood, and is preferably square in plan. 3 represents a relatively thin sheet of paper or the like, which may be pasted or otherwise secured to the top face of the board 2, and upon which may be imprinted lines 3′, and similar cross-lines 3^a, by which the board is laid out in squares 4, the latter being preferably of equal size, and there being an equal number of the squares running in the direction of the principal dimensions of the board. Every square 4 may be occupied or traversed by the playing pieces during the game, and the pieces of the respective opponents practically control the squares lying on their sides of the central or neutral row, as F. 5 represents a series of L-shaped barriers, which are placed in different portions of the board, for interrupting the free straight-away progress of the playing pieces over said portions. The said barriers may not be crossed by any of the players, but afford means of escape for the playing pieces of one player when they are being pursued by the other player's pieces; and the arrangement of certain of said barriers being such that they afford safe havens, from which the playing pieces may not be driven, until a player chooses to move them clear of the barriers. The said barriers are also so arranged that neither player may move any of his men in a direct course from his section of the board to the farthermost row (A or K) of squares of his opponent's section of the board. The said barriers also afford means for one of the players to maneuver his playing pieces so as to prevent the same from being cornered as well as for facilitating the surrounding or blocking of the pieces of an opponent. The said barriers are preferably so arranged that all of the squares in rows C, F and I are open and clear, thereby allowing each player to move his pieces laterally in a straight line substantially the full breadth of the board, unless the said free courses happen to be blocked by one or more playing pieces.

For convenience in describing the arrangement and use of my game board, the squares are numbered consecutively, as from 1 to 121, the said numbers preferably

starting at the lower left corner, and running progressively from left to right through the transverse rows. The alternate squares of the rows A, D, H and K are preferably marked with the angular barriers 5, and within the said barriers are shown circles 7, for indicating the squares upon which the playing pieces of the opponents should be placed at the start of a game. The playing pieces may be of any desired shape, but they are usually round, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4, and are also preferably of different color, as black and red, the same as in the game of draughts. The tops of the pieces are usually plain, and the bottoms thereof may be marked with a star, or other suitable symbol, as shown in Fig. 3.

When the game is about to begin, each player takes twelve men of the same color and disposes them with their plain faces upwardly on the circles 7, in rows A—D and H—K, at the respective sides of the board. By this arrangement, the opposing pieces are positioned on the corresponding squares and directly facing each other (see Fig. 5). For the purpose of this description, the plain tops of the pieces are inscribed with similar numbers running consecutively, say from 1 to 12, and all of the pieces of the same color also bear a similar distinguishing letter, as 1^B, 2^B, 3^B, for indicating the black pieces, and 1^R, 2^R, 3^R, for indicating the red pieces. At the start of the game, all of the pieces or men are understood to be "common" men or "privates," whose maneuvers are limited, until they have succeeded in reaching either the first or eleventh row of squares (A or K), after which the said pieces become "stars" or "kings," by simply turning them bottom-side upwards. The common men may only be moved one square at a time, except when a piece of one player takes an opponent's piece, at which times the victorious piece leaps over the vanquished piece, and lands on the next square beyond, and the captured piece may then be removed from the board. The taking of an opponent's pieces may be optional, unless the taking is insisted upon by the opponent. The common men may be moved straight ahead towards the adversary's portion of the board, or they may be moved laterally in either direction, when not hindered by the barriers, or by other pieces; but the common men may not be moved backwards at any stage of the game. After the common pieces have become "stars" or "kings," by entering either of the transverse rows A or K, they may be moved one square at a time in any direction, except diagonally. A star-piece may move into a square directly behind a common man, while the latter is travelling towards the opponent's side of the board, and cannot be captured by the common man; but if the star-piece should move laterally into the square next to a common man, the latter may capture the star-piece unless said piece is protected by one of the barriers, as explained. The playing pieces may be moved around all of the barriers, except those in rows A, K, L and V, but the barriers may not be crossed at any time by either the star of common pieces. The barriers in the rows B and J are provided principally for protecting the "king" rows A—K. Corresponding barriers, as 5′, consisting of plain vertical shaded markings, as shown in rows B, E, G and J, as well as in rows O and S tend to lessen the number of moves required to either advance towards or from the "king" rows. The barriers 5′ afford a number of relatively long free vertical courses for the pieces of the opposing players, and tend to reduce the chances of prematurely blocking the game. The barriers 5′ provide means for evading pursuit or capture from certain directions, and at the same time afford means at different points of the board, for effecting the cornering of an opponent's pieces.

The rings or circles 7, may be dispensed with, without serious inconvenience, or danger of mistakes or confusion, after the players have become familiar with the board; and the barriers 5—5′ may be applied to the board in any suitable order or position, and the numbers of the barriers may be increased or decreased, in order to vary the movements of the playing pieces, or for providing a larger number of traps, similar to those shown in squares 1 and 121, into which a player may unwittingly move a common man or a star-piece, which is closely followed by one or more of the opponent's pieces. To illustrate: A red piece may be moved into square 1, in order to become a star, and if followed closely by a black piece, the red star may be completely cornered in case the black piece is moved into square 23. Whereas, if the red piece had been moved into either of the squares 3 or 4, the said piece might be moved laterally, as from 3 to 2, or from 4 to 5, and vice versa, until the opponent finally succeeds in placing a man in either square 25 or 27, and at the same time places a man in the row A.

After the opposing players have moved their respective pieces towards each other, as from row D to row E, and from row H to row G, as indicated by the dotted lines in Fig. 5, no farther advances across the middle row F may be made by either player, except to give and take the pieces. But as neither of the black or red pieces in rows E and G are backed up or protected by any other pieces, the players cannot make any forward moves without sacrificing the men.

The "king" rows 1 and 11 must therefore be drawn upon for men to support the advanced pieces in rows E—G, or the pieces in rows A and K may be moved forwardly, or laterally before an attack and subsequent advance from the rows E and G.

The following example will show how plays may be made after the above described advances: The piece B^2 may be moved, as from square 3 to 14, 25, 26, 37, 38, for supporting piece B^9. When this has been accomplished, the player of the blacks, at his next turn, may move B^9 from square 49 to square 60, to be taken by R^9, by the latter leaping from square 71 to square 49; and R^9 may then be taken by B^2 leaping from square 38 to square 60. There being no red piece directly in front of B^2, the latter may be moved forwardly from 60 to 71, and thence to 70 or 82, provided the opponent has not brought forward one or more red men from the rear rows, to intercept the black's moves, as described. If B^2, which is still a common piece should be moved into square 82, the next move said piece must make will be from 82 to 83. If there should be a red piece on square 94, B^2 may not leave square 82, unless it is intended that said piece shall be captured. In case square 94 is unoccupied, B^2 may then be moved from 82 to 83, and thence to 94; but if there is a red piece in either square 93 or square 95, it would be hazardous for B^2, a common piece, to occupy 83, since the red piece may be moved laterally into square 94, and being protected by the barrier in square 105, the red piece would be in position to capture B^2 by leaping to square 72. If however, no red pieces chance to be in row I, or if in said row, are not near enough to hinder the progress of B^2, the latter may be moved from 83 into 94, thence to 93 or 95, and from either of the latter squares B^2 may again be moved forwardly towards row K, to be made a star or king, provided either of the squares 115 or 117 happen to be vacant. B^2 having reached a square in row K, may be turned face downwardly and may thereafter be moved back towards the black men's side of the board, or in every other direction, except diagonally, in order to chase, corner, or capture the opponent's men, as well as to protect or support other common black pieces.

In case the player of the red men makes answering moves similar to those of the blacks, in the early stages of the game, the giving and taking of the men in the vicinity of row F may occur, as described, but the subsequent advances of the respective common pieces may be hindered by the skillful deploying of the opponents' pieces, and therefore require considerable strategy in order for either of the players to reach the opposite "king" rows. Careless or unwitting plays of the common men often result in either losing the men, or else having them blocked and rendered effortless, by the adversary. In case there are no interferences, a black man, as for example B^4, may be advanced from row A to row K in thirteen moves, as follows: From square 7 to 18, 29, 30, 41, 52, 51, 62, 73, 84, 85, 96, 107 to 118. If B^4 were to move from 41 to 42 and thence straight forward to 86 then laterally to 87, and again straight ahead to 119, it would require 14 moves for said piece to become a star.

By reference to Fig. 1, it will be seen, that a piece in square 46 may be cornered by the opponent placing a piece on square 24, and another piece on square 56. Square 46 is also dominated by the square 34, since a piece on square 46 may be captured if moved either to square 35 or 45. A red piece in the square 40 may be cornered, by placing a common black piece in square 28, or a black star in square 50, and another black star piece in square 62. These examples illustrate a few of the many chances the board affords for cornering an opponent's pieces and winning. The most favorable positions on the board for either player are the squares 26, 30, 58, 60, 62, 64, 92 and 96. From either of these squares a star piece may be moved in the four cardinal directions, and many of said moves will be protected by the several barriers that are disposed near the said squares. A common black piece in square 84 may be effectually blocked by a common red piece in square 96, or by a red star piece in either square 74 or 96. From the foregoing it will be understood that common pieces of either color may be similarly blocked at several corresponding positions on the board.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim, is—

1. A game board comprising a plane body having on its top face a plurality of squares into and across which playing pieces may be moved, the said squares being of equal size and being arranged in similar horizontal and vertical rows, the said rows containing the same number of squares, the first and fourth rows from the opposite sides of the board containing markings designating the positions of the playing pieces at the start of a game, and said face being marked with L-shaped barriers which are disposed in different positions in each of the vertical rows of squares for changing the direction of movement of the playing pieces.

2. A game board having its top face laid out in rows of squares demarked by lines that cross each other at right angles, the corresponding transverse rows in the upper

and lower halves of the board having their alternate squares marked for designating the position of the playing pieces at the start of a game, and all of said markings being partially inclosed by angular barriers which may be entered but may not be crossed by the playing pieces, and the barriers of the corresponding corner squares of each half of the board being arranged to form pockets adapted for trapping an adversary's playing pieces at certain stages of the game.

3. A game board comprising a flat body having on its face a plurality of vertical and horizontal lines which cross each other and form a plurality of similar squares into and across which playing pieces may be moved, the said squares being arranged in vertical and transverse rows, certain of the squares being inscribed with angular barriers across which no playing piece may be moved, the said barriers occurring in all of the vertical and in certain of the transverse rows for interrupting the continuity of travel of the playing pieces in said rows, and corresponding squares in the upper and lower halves of the board being inscribed with plain bar-barriers for preventing premature blocking of the playing pieces of either player.

4. A game board comprising a square flat body having its top inscribed with vertical and horizontal lines for dividing said body into squares which extend in parallel rows across two dimensions of the body, and wherein all of said rows contain an equal number of squares, all of the vertical rows being inscribed with angular barriers for interrupting the continuous forward movements of the playing pieces along said rows, the said barriers also providing interruptions to the continuous lateral movements of the playing pieces in certain of the horizontal rows of squares, certain of said barriers adapted to provide safe havens for the playing pieces, and all of said barriers adapted to provide means for cornering or blocking the playing pieces of one player by the pieces of his adversary.

5. A game board comprising a substantially square body having on its top face vertical and horizontal lines, for dividing the board into a number of rows, each having an equal number of similar squares, barriers inscribed on the alternate squares of the horizontal rows, the barriers of one row being staggered relatively to the barriers of the adjacent rows, and corresponding squares of the upper and lower halves of the board being marked to designate the positions of the playing pieces at the start of a game, the said designating marks being partially surrounded by barriers, and being located in the alternate vertical rows of squares, and barriers in certain of the horizontal rows between the starting positions being arranged to prevent the continuous advance and retreat of the playing pieces vertically as well as horizontally in all of the vertical rows and also in a majority of the horizontal rows.

6. A game board comprising a plane body having on its top face a plurality of squares into and across which playing pieces may be moved, the said squares being of equal size, and being arranged in similar horizontal and vertical rows, and each row containing the same number of squares, corresponding rows of squares of the upper and lower halves of the board having their alternate squares marked to designate the assembling of the playing pieces at the start of a game, and all of said designating marks being partially surrounded by barriers across which the playing pieces may not be moved.

7. In a game board, a plane body having on its top face a plurality of squares into and across which playing pieces may be moved, the said squares being arranged in similar longitudinal and vertical rows and each row containing an equal number of squares, corresponding rows of squares of the upper and lower halves of the board having their alternate squares marked for designating the positions of the playing pieces at the start of the game, all of said designating marks being partially surrounded by barriers across which the playing pieces may not be moved, and similar barriers being disposed in squares contiguous to the starting positions for barring the advance and retreat of the playing pieces vertically as well as horizontally.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature.

THOMAS B. SEARLE.